

# Finding hidden depths in complex ceramics

**K**evin White takes as his starting point the blue and white ceramic traditions of Japan, particularly as interpreted by British ceramics of the 19th century. White covers the surface of his straight-sided and simple vessels with rich patterning.

In *Catalogue No. 7*, rectangular areas of blue and white bamboo-like leaves, layered upon each other are contrasted by strong, wide vertical bands of brown and green.

The brush marks give the appearance of bark, or rough



**MEREDITH HINCHLIFFE**

**Kevin White - Porcelain**

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin until November 19. Open daily, 10am-5pm.

timber but they are smooth to the touch. The arrangement of the formal, geometric surface decoration constrains the exuberant combination of colours and textures. Red enamel has been

juxtaposed with gold lustre in a chequerboard pattern on several pots. In others a black and white chequerboard contrasts with the quiet of blue and white leaves. Areas of gold lustre are highlighted by narrow frames of black or alternated with red.

The surface of *Catalogue No. 11* introduces new colours – yellow, blue and white with black – which are reminiscent of Mondrian's graphic designs.

In several pieces, White has included a tiny area of floral decoration, perhaps a decal, which is evocative of a 19th-century fine

bone china tea service and reflects on the Western history of porcelain.

While White included vessels with pouring spouts and small teapots in previous exhibitions, this time he is displaying larger, pared back bowls. A fine rim around the base prevents the forms from being dumpy as they hover above their surface. The larger canvas gives him more room and so the areas of colour and decoration are larger and have stronger impact.

White's ceramics are complex. At one glance they could appear to

be all about decoration, but they have hidden depths which a serious viewer will appreciate.

The visual tension between the strong colours and the paler, cooler blue and white is one thing, but the combination of the decoration on porcelain is also a paradox. He explores traditional Japanese techniques and these cool, quiet pots are surprisingly still.

White has studied ceramics in Japan and Britain. This exhibition is the work of a mature, confident artist who is at one with his medium.